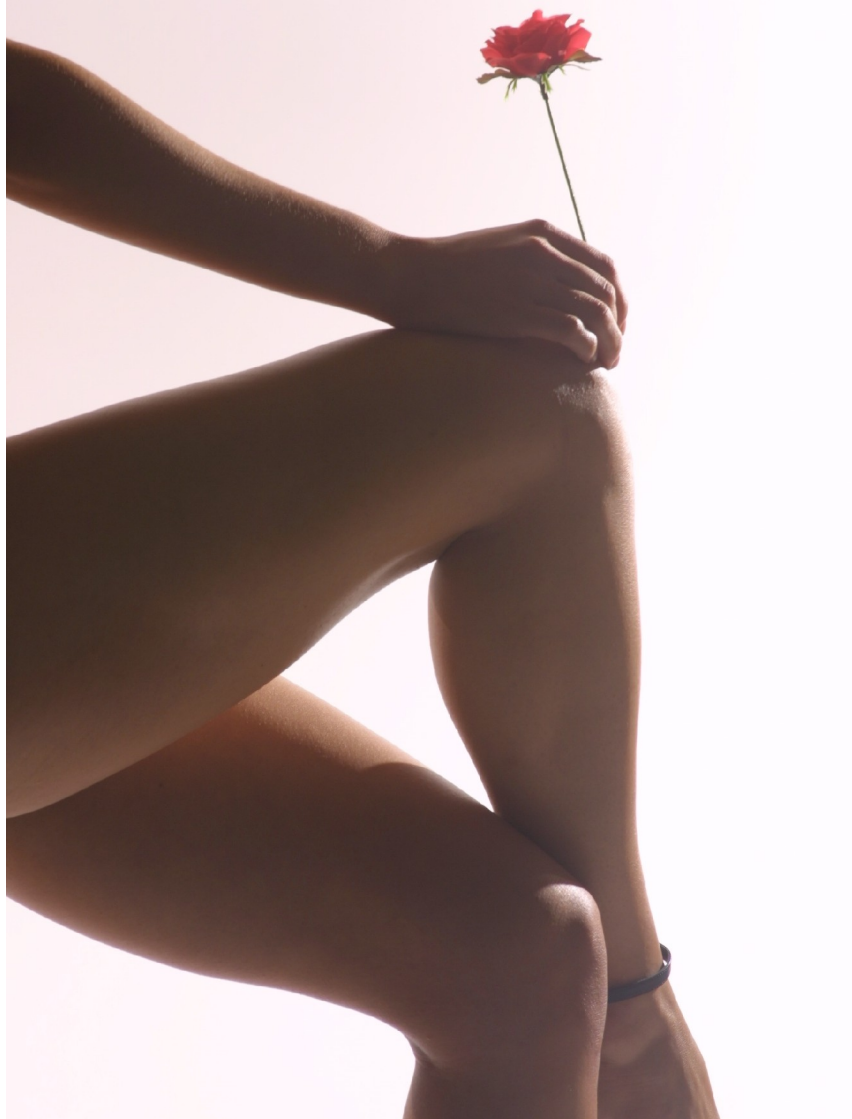# Glamour Nude Photography at Home

Forward

For years I have not only shot pictures, but taught others how to use their cameras. Often I have found that a few tips can drastically improve the quality of the photo and the satisfaction of the photographer with their results. This book is intended not only for the amateur photographer but also for couples that would like to experiment at home. It not only has information on equipment you might like to have but also how to use what you already have, to produce better pictures.

I would like to thank my wife Brenda for her support and assistance in the production of the photos and materials for this book. Also Diana Atkinson for her encouragement and insistence that I could do this.

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Photography

It is common for people to under estimate the importance of the photographer. It is the photographer's skill and vision that makes the difference between a photograph and a snapshot. Most people can't tell you what makes the difference but they can see it in the images. It is the photographer's job to know how to make that difference. Photography is a blend of technical skill and imagination.

Many years ago I was at a photo club shoot in which there were a number of models participating. I was shooting at one of the indoor sets with several other photographers when the studio flashes started malfunctioning. At that point I figured there was no reason to continue since anything I shot would be of poor quality so I disconnected and walked over to a table to set my camera up for shooting outside. Someone else came to the same table and was setting his camera up to connect to the defective lighting rig. When I let him know about the problem he just shrugged and said, "That's where the girl is". It is important to remember that just having an attractive woman in the image is not enough to make it a good photograph. Every photo has a story to tell and it should not be "the photographer didn't care"

Figure photography is not as easy as it might seem. It is more that just having a pretty girl take her clothes off. The photographer is often expected to direct hairstyle, wardrobe, posing and to set the mood. Background composition and lighting are also major components of the image. Also no woman is perfect so there may be things that you wish to conceal, often without letting her know that you are doing it.

The technical aspects of photography intimidate many people and many of the cameras don't help that with the myriad of features and menus that are provided. However basic operation of a camera is not as complex as you might think and most people can take better pictures with just a few simple tips.

When it all comes together the results can be magic. The image is a split second frozen in time. It can reflect a mood or tell a story. It is a reflection of both the model and the photographer. I have received many compliments from the models that I have worked with but the one that stands out the most for me is a friend who told me that the images made her feel better about herself. I often think about this and it has been my goal that whether I am working with a professional or amateur model, at the end of the day she is happy with the images as well.

Choosing a camera

You will probably want to start out with a camera that you already have but this section should be useful both for recognizing features that you may already have or as a guide if you should choose to upgrade.

Digital vs. Film

This is often the subject of heated debates among photographers, some being very happy with their new digital cameras and others not wanting to give up their film cameras. Given this it help to have a little information when making this choice.

Film

Most film cameras are lower cost for the equipment and many people prefer the color and tone qualities of the pictures. There are several drawbacks though

1. The cost of film and developing. This will often make you think twice before pressing the shutter release.
2. The lack of privacy. Unless you intend to set up a darkroom the file will have to go to the lab. If you are shooting nude images this could be a consideration.
3. Stopping to change film. Most digital cameras can hold enough memory to take over a hundred pictures.
4. You have to wait to see the pictures
5. They must be scanned if you intend to use them on a computer
6. Retouching is very difficult also requiring a darkroom.

If you do choose to get a film camera the size of the film is the first consideration. The general rule is the larger the film the better the quality. Cameras using film smaller that 35mm should be avoided because film grain will be visible in the pictures, especially if they are enlarge beyond normal snapshot size. Larger formats such as 120 will of course cost more to purchase and process. Most people choose the 35mm as a good balance between quality and cost.

Digital

While I still have film cameras my preference is to use my digital cameras now. Most models have come to expect it and enjoy being able to get copies of the images at the end of a shoot. Resolution is not really an issue anymore since most digital cameras now will produce images good enough to make 8X10 or larger prints. Some photographers however do not like the tone and contrast of the images. There are a number of advantages.

1. You have the freedom to shoot as many pictures as you want with out worrying about the cost. You can experiment all you want then just hit delete if you don't like them.
2. You can see and print the photos right away.
3. Privacy. You won't have to send the images to the lab and worry about someone making copies.
4. The images are computer ready so you can print, email or post them on the web with out scanning.
5. Retouching can be done with a photo editor on your computer

The major specification that people look at on digital cameras is the resolution, which is usually listed in mega-pixels. The larger the number the better, but it is not necessary to get the most expensive. A camera, 1.3 meg or better, will take good images suitable for small prints or computer display. A 3 meg camera will make nice 8x10 prints. Another good feature to look for is the LCD screen so that you can preview the images in the camera. Some cameras use the LCD as the viewfinder, personally I find this a bit awkward but that could be attributed to many years of using eye level view finders.

Lens

Having interchangeable lenses is preferred but since many cameras now come with zoom lenses it is not essential.

For a 35mm camera you will want a lens with more than an 80mm focal length. Zoom lenses are marked with a range such as 35-135. Since the top number exceeds what is required this lens will work fine. The second feature to look for on these lenses is the aperture, which is marked as f-stops. With this number lower numbers are better. A typical zoom or telephoto lens will be 3.5 to 4.5 if you get the opportunity to get one with a lower number it is helpful for low light images such as candlelight.

On most digital cameras the lenses are not interchangeable but most do come with a zoom lens. The feature to watch for here is optical zoom. Many cameras are advertising digital zoom or a combination such as 3X optical and 2X digital to make a combined 6X. You do not want to use the digital zoom. The digital zoom does not capture any additional detail in the images. The camera estimates what might have been between two pixels, and fills in the value.

These images show a 6X digital zoom compared to optical.
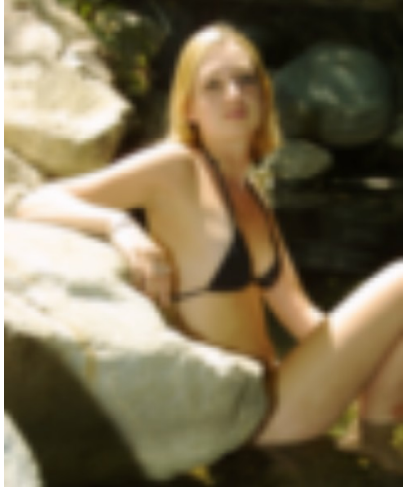
This is exaggerated to show the effect more clearly since most cameras don't have a 6X digital zoom. If you have a camera with both digital and optical zoom it is a good idea to turn off the digital since it will only degrade the image.

Another feature to look for on the lens is a filter thread. This is used for mounting accessories to the front of the lens. This is not essential but can come in useful for some situations.

Controls

Having a lot of controls on the camera can be intimidating at first but having them will give you more ability to adapt to the situation rather than having to change the situation to fit the camera. Most modern cameras have a point and shoot mode so that you don't have to learn to use all the features at once so it is a good idea to have the additional controls available for when you are ready to use them.

Focus

Automatic

Many cameras will focus automatically when the shutter button is depressed. While this can't be used in all cases it is a nice feature to have.

Manual

The ability to manually focus the camera can be useful since the camera will not always be able to determine what you are intending to focus on. There are also condition where the focusing system will get confuse and not be able to lock at all.

There are also many older cameras that do not have auto focus

Fixed

This basically a one size fits all method that is used on cheaper cameras. The focus is preset to be ok from about 5' to infinity. This is not recommended since it is a compromise and the focus will be soft most of the time.

Aperture

This is the size of the opening through then lens. In addition to being one of the factors controlling exposure it also controls the depth of field. It is measured in f stops

Shutter speed

This controls the length of time the shutter is open. This is another factor controlling exposure.

White Balance

This is a feature of digital cameras use to compensate for different colors of light. Sunlight, incandescent and florescent lights are all different colors though most people don't not realize it. It can be very pronounced in photos.

For film cameras the compensation is done by, loading daylight or tungsten film, or using different colored filters.

Flash

The built in flashes on most cameras do not have enough power for more than about 10-15 feet and tend to produce red eye in addition to distracting shadows on the background behind the subject. An external flash is one way to deal with these problems though there are others which will be discussed later.

Accessories

Memory

This applies only to digital cameras. I recommend getting the largest memory chips available, or that you can afford. The memory that comes with most

cameras is only large enough to hold a few images. With the larger memory you can shoot all day and unload your camera in the evening even when you are using the highest resolution.

Filters

There are many types of filters that can be used. Some correct color, others create special effects or cut down glare. For some cameras you can get telephoto or wide angle lenses that attach to the filter thread on your camera.

Tripod

This is useful for holding the camera steady or using the self-timer so you can be in the photo. It is usually not necessary when using a flash or shooting outside, but is very important if you are shooting in low light conditions.

Basic Operation

Exposure

Three things control natural or flood light exposure. The sensitivity of the film or imaging element, the length of time the shutter is open and the size of the lens aperture. Most cameras will automatically adjust these, but there are times when you may want to take control of one or more of these features.

Film sensitivity is measured by ASA or ISO numbers, which you will find marked on the package. Many digital cameras use the same numbering system to set the sensitivity. The higher the number the more sensitive to light, but there is a trade off. The higher the ASA rating the more grain in the picture. You will get a better quality picture by using a lower ASA and more light.

The shutter controls the amount of time for the exposure usually in fractions of a second although some exposures can be several seconds long for low light conditions. Here again there is a trade off. If your exposure is too slow movement of either the camera or the subject may cause the picture to blur. It is usually not possible to hold the camera by hand at less than 1/30 of a second and you have to be very careful at that speed. If you have enough light to get to 1/60 or 1/125 you have a much better chance of avoiding motion blur.

The lens aperture is control by an iris much like your eyes. The size of the opening controls the amount of light coming in. It also effects the depth of field, which will be mentioned later.

Flash exposure is a little different. Flash speeds can be 1/5000 to 1/30000 of a second so main consideration on the shutter is that it is fully open when the flash triggers. Most cameras either set the speed for you or have a mark on the shutter

speed you should use for flash exposure. The major factors controlling exposure now are the power the flash puts out, the lens aperture and the distance from the flash to the subject. The subject being too far away from the flash is one of the most common mistakes, especially using the on camera flash which is only usable out to 10 or 15 feet. This has resulted in many blank pictures and is also the reason that background objects are not seen in night pictures.

There may be condition that will require some exposure compensation. Models with light skin may look better with a little less light. Models with dark skin may require more. A bright light source behind the model can fool the camera into setting the exposure incorrectly. Be alert for conditions that may require some changes, if in doubt take several shots at different exposures to be sure. Many cameras have a feature to change the exposure up or down even while in the automatic mode.

Focus

Most cameras will focus on the center of the viewfinder. This may mean that you will have to place it on the object you wish to focus on before composing the shot. In many cases the cameras auto settings can be held by half depressing the shutter button and then moving the camera to compose the shot before fully depressing it.
You should also be aware that many auto focus systems have trouble with plain objects such as a wall or sky. It helps to have some detail such as a pattern or line close to the center for the camera to lock on to. In some difficult situations it may be necessary to put the camera into manual focus mode so that you can be sure your subject is in focus and not something else.

Camera Steadiness

Camera movement can blur the images especially at slower shutter speeds. At less than 1/30 of a second a tripod is essential. It will also be necessary for the model to hold still. If the model is moving you will generally want to go to 1/125 or faster.

Models

Many women are willing to pose nude provided that the images are tasteful. Some may also have concerns about what the images will be used for. Your wife or girlfriend is the first obvious choice for a model, especially if the photos are kept private. Friends are another possibility, in this case it generally helps to have examples of what you want to do and to not be too aggressive since she may or may not be receptive to the idea. These may be the best choices starting out since it will be a lower pressure situation and you will already have a rapport with the person.

It is also possible to find models on various Internet forums and databases. Generally they will want to be paid but there also are advantages since many of them are experienced at posing and since you generally know ahead of time if they are willing to pose nude it can be less awkward. When contacting one of these models you should expect them to ask for details about the pictures you want to do. Some will ask for references and samples of your work. Most will bring someone with them to a shoot for their safety. Be courteous and honest with them. Never ask a model to do anything she is not comfortable with, never touch her without permission, and make sure there is a clear understanding about the type of pictures and what they will be used for. . If everyone is agreed on price and subject matter, great, if not then there are other models.

There are some standard terms that you may run into when talking with experienced or professional models. Here are some definitions.

FASHION
The modeling of clothes where the clothing is the subject of the photos.

GLAMOUR
This style focuses on the model rather than the clothes. It could apply to Lingerie or Nude as well depending on the subject of the photo.

LINGERIE
This term is fairly obvious but you should specify if it is sheer, semi sheer or opaque lingerie since it may make a difference to the model.

IMPLIED NUDE
Implied Nude refers to an image where the model is nude or partially nude but the pose, props or lighting obscures the image so that nothing explicit is shown. An example would be the type of image that is on bath products or panty hose

FIGURE OR ARTISTIC NUDE
This is a form of nude modeling normally used for art rather than glamour. It is somewhat hard to define the difference, much is up to personal interpretation. Figure will usually emphasize the form and curves of a woman's body. Artistic may another purpose or message behind the image rather than just showing off the models body.

FULL NUDE
This is pretty much what you would think.

PLAYBOY STYLE
This is a commonly used term to describe a tasteful style of nude modeling. It comes from the style typically used in the magazine. It would usually be full nude, well lit but not too explicit.

PORTFOLIO OR BOOK
Photo album with examples of a model's or photographers work.

RELEASE
A document a model signs after the shoot giving the photographer permission to use the photos that have been taken.

TFP
Time For Prints. A model works for a photographer without a cash payment. Instead, the model is given a number of prints or images on CD as payment for her work. Sometimes a more recent term, TFCD, indicating that the images will be on CD rather than paper.

Location

There is usually more in the picture than just the model. All of the elements of the picture should be considered so you will want to take some care in choosing your location as well.

Originality

Most of the time a beach or swimming pool is chosen for swimsuit shots, a bed or bath for nude or lingerie. While these locations are ok, they have been used so much that they are not likely to inspire as much interest unless you are able to create a unique approach to it. If you look around and use your imagination many more things will present themselves.

We got the idea for this image as we were packing up at the end of a shoot.

Background

Attention should be given to the background since it is also a part of the image. You will want to reduce distractions from clutter, cables, reflections etc. Take a few minutes to look at everything that is in the background and decide if it belongs in the image. Think about if the background adds to the image or if you need to reduce its effect.

Changing your viewpoint or moving objects that are a problem can vastly improve and image. For things that can't be moved using depth of field to blur the background will help.

If you decide to use an artificial background you can use painted drop cloths or perhaps an artistically draped cloth. What should be avoided is hanging a sheet or cloth in an attempt to get a plain background. The material will never hang straight and the seams and wrinkles will always be visible, giving it a decidedly amateur look. The plain/ nonexistent looking background you see in commercial images is done with a wide seamless paper which is available at photography stores.

Space

Because longer lenses are preferred having enough space to step back from the model is important. This can be a problem in cases such as small bedrooms where you would be forced to use a wide-angle lens, which will create a distortion of the image. Check the area you intend to shoot with your camera to make sure you can get the shot you want using the telephoto setting not the wide angle. If you can't get far enough away from your subject try shooting diagonally or through a doorway.

This is one of the advantages to shooting outside since you will generally have more room to work with.

Privacy

This is particularly important for nude or semi nude images for obvious reasons. Though most people do not object, not everyone will be appreciative. Too many people around will usually make the model nervous resulting in a stressed look.

This does not mean that outdoor locations can not be used. It means that some care must be taken in picking the location, such as an area where you can see if someone is approaching. It is also a good idea to keep something close at hand that the model can use to quickly cover up. I often use a sarong for this since it quick to put on and it makes an interesting outfit. Timing is also important, some areas that are full of people at one time may be totally deserted at another.

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Makeup

The everyday makeup that the model wears may or may not be suitable for photography. The camera can pickup very small imperfections that would not normally be noticed. The makeup can be very useful in covering blemishes but should also not be over done. It can be over done to the point of looking like a mask. Liquid foundations are usually better for covering blemishes, especially with digital cameras as they can sometimes see through certain materials.

Posing

When all the other preparations are done you will have your model sitting there waiting for you to tell her what to do. While this may be the subject of a lot of fantasies the reality is more difficult than it sounds. The beginning of a shoot can often be awkward and often the first few frames that are shot don't turn out well.

It is important to remember that the still image will be viewed differently than the person is in real life. Motion draws the eye differently than the patterns of a still image. With the still image there is much more time to examine every detail.

As a starting point the model should be posed perpendicular to the lens of the camera. That is no part of her body should be significantly closer than any other because this will make it appear larger especially if you are forced to use a wide angle lens. Of course you can also use this effect to your advantage if you need to emphasize or deemphasize a portion of the body. An example would be a model whose hips are a little larger than she would like. If the camera is moved closer to her head then her hips will appear smaller in the picture due to being further away from the camera.

Posture is important, remind the model to sit up straight. This will flatten her stomach and emphasize her bust line. She should also appear relaxed, not awkward or tense.

Unless they are intended to be a prominent part of the picture, avoid showing the flat surfaces of the hands, show finger edges. Fingers should not be pointed into the lens. Fingers should not be intertwined. Never rest a head on a fist.

Facial features such as lines, wrinkles, deep set eyes can be reduced by using softer forward lighting. Changing the tilt of the model's head can reduce a double chin.

Eye Glass Wearers- Watch carefully for reflections in the lenses. You should either change the light location or change to pose slightly to avoid them becoming a problem. If you are using flashes it helps to have a continuous light source at the same location so that you can see reflections before taking the picture. A polarizing filter may also help. Often you will want to simply remove the glasses.

Watch for things that may cause distractions in the images such as strings, stray hairs, clothing tags or straps.

It is very common for the model to not know what to do with her hands. Some kind of prop can be a big help with this, both giving the model something to do and adding a bit of accent to the picture.

Though it can be difficult to catch at just the right moment, movement can also be used to add life to the photograph. Examples would be tossing her hair or splashing some water. It may take a number of repetitions to capture a good image but it is often worth it. You will probably want to use higher shutter speeds on this to avoid motion blurring. If the model is walking or running the technique will vary some depending on the direction of motion. If the direction is across your field of view you will probably want to track the camera with the model. If the motion is toward or away from you pick a point to focus on and snap the picture when the model reaches that point.

After all the technical do's and don'ts it is time to be creative. Often a magazine can be a source of posing ideas to start, it can also help in getting an idea what the model likes. Once you get started you will likely see other possibilities and it becomes easier as the communication with the model improves. Experiment with different things to see what works. This is one of the areas that a digital camera helps with, since you can shoot it and look at it with out worrying about the cost. If you have a pose that is close to what you want you may want to shoot several frames with small variations in viewpoint or pose to fine tune the image.

Often I will stop after a few frames to show the model what we are getting in the camera. I find that this helps in several ways. It help her to have an idea what she looks like and what improvement she might make in a pose. It also helps many models to relax when they see that we are getting good pictures. Many women have commented that they look better than they thought they did. As the model gets more confident about her appearance in the images she will usually become more open about experimenting with different poses and often comes up with more ideas on her own. Showing the images also give the model more confidence in what you are shooting. Many women will pose for artistic nude photos that will not for more explicit shots. Once while doing a series of nude shot I saw the opportunity for an interesting close up shot of the models knees so I quickly zoomed in and got the shot before she changed positions. She saw the lens extend and I think she was a bit nervous about what I was doing until I showed her the shot I had just done.

One point here, sometime it is difficult to describe what you want the model to do. It is may be easier to use a hands on approach to position the model but in many circumstances it is highly inappropriate to touch the model. If you are shooting your girlfriend or wife it may be ok, but in other circumstances make sure that the model is comfortable with anything that you do. Doing anything that makes her uncomfortable will just destroy the quality of the pictures anyhow.

Lighting

Natural Light

This light source is the least expensive and the easiest to use. A shaded area outside will give a good low contrast light. Direct sun should be used more carefully, since it will result in higher contrast. I'm sure everyone at one time or another has had a friend or family member that wanted to take a group and posed everyone facing the sun making it impossible for anyone to open their eyes without squinting. It is really not necessary. Posing the model with the sun behind her makes sure she can open her eyes and has a nice effect on the hair.

Natural light can also be used indoors if there are sufficiently large windows.

Flash

If you have the opportunity to get an external flash for your camera it is a good idea. The on camera flashes tend to be to low a power and are too close to the lens. The first imposes limitations on the distance to your subject, 10 to 15 feet in most cases. The second causes red eye due to reflections off the retina of the eye. External flashes generally have more power and separating the flash from the camera even by a few inches will help prevent the red eye effect.

It is also possible to get slave units for external flashes that allow them to be triggered by the flash on your camera. This allows you to use more than one flash, light larger a room and light your subject from different angles.

New flash units can be expensive but they can also be had at swap meets and garage sales for very little. Online auctions such as ebay also have good deals at times. Some sets of studio flashes with stands and reflectors have gone for less that $200. Some experimentation may be necessary to get the exposure right and to estimate where the shadows will fall. A good starting point if you don't have a flash meter is 1/60 shutter speed and f8 aperture. Auto thrysistor flashes are helpful since they have the ability to measure and adjust the exposure

automatically. With a digital camera you can simply shoot a frame, look at the result and then adjust if necessary.

Lights

Most normal room lights are not bright enough to take a good quality picture. There are several low cost ways to work around this though. Most hardware stores sell quartz halogen work lights at a fairly low price. Since they also some with a stand they are well suited for this purpose. It is also possible to get photo bulbs from a photo shop that will fit normal light fixtures, though it does need to be a fixture that will take a higher amount of heat than normal.

The advantage to this type of lighting is that you can see where the shadows are ahead of time. The disadvantage is that they will heat up the room so you will probably want some windows open.

Reflectors

Reflectors are used for filling in shadows or for softening the light. The reflector can be placed opposite the main light source to fill in the shadows. Another setup would be to turn the light away from the subject and use the reflector to direct it back like the umbrella reflectors that you see in the studios. This creates a softer lighting effect.

A white wall or ceiling will act as a reflector, many flashes have a tilt head to take advantage of this by bouncing the flash off the ceiling. Be careful of walls that are not white or gray, they will color the light that is reflected. Old projection screens are good reflectors, another item you can pick up cheap at garage sales. You can also make hand held reflectors by covering a piece of cardboard with aluminum foil. For hand held reflectors it helps to have an assistant.

If you wish to deepen a shadow a piece of black material can be used.

Angles

Direct forward lighting is not always best choice. Lighting from the side or even the back can show the model's figure in very different ways. In this photo there were three lights on the background and none on the model. Not only did it provide a more dramatic lighting effect but it also provided some anonymity for the model, who was nervous about posing nude.

Color

Though we don't pay attention to it most of the time not all light is the same color. What is normally described as white light, can actually appear quite different when it has been captured in a picture. Direct sunlight is a little more yellow than shade. Home lighting is usually yellow/orange compared to daylight. Florescent lights turn out green. This has often been a mystery to people when they look at the images later and try to figure out why the color is not what they remembered. The human brain compensates for these different colored light sources, but the camera does not.

White Balance

This is a common feature of digital cameras. The setting is usually marked with icons showing sunlight, clouds, a light bulb, a fluorescent tube and a lightning bolt (flash). Most cameras do have an automatic position, which is the default setting. If you are not sure what the light color is the auto white balance is a

useful feature but there are cases that will cause it to set incorrectly. Since the auto feature works by averaging the colors in the frame too much of one color can trick it. An example would be shooting a model with bushes behind her. This would have more green than normal in the frame and the camera will try to compensate. The only time I really use the auto white balance is when there is mixed light or unusual light sources. Examples would be a room that has both incandescent and florescent lights or a room that has large windows in addition to artificial light. In these cases the primary light source will depend and where you are facing in the room so it is easier to let the camera decide.

If you know what color the light is it is you will get better color reproduction if you set it manually. Just remember to change it when you move to another type of light.

Filters

Color corrections can be done with filters. An example would be using a blue filter (80a) to correct the color of indoor lighting. Using filters does require that you have either a filter thread or a filter adapter for your camera on the front of the lens. Many point and shoot type cameras do not have this ability. If your camera does not have this you may be able to adapt something with rubber bands, foil or tape.

Film Type

Most film is daylight balance, which gets its best color in open shade. Tungsten file is also available which is for shooting in room light with incandescent lights.

Composition

It is important to look at the image in the viewfinder as a picture. Often we don't see things in real life the same as we do in a picture. Learn to look at it as though it has already been taken. This may mean that the model will have to stay still for a moment so be sure to tell her if you wish her to stay still or move slightly. It may be necessary to explain what you are doing to her. Often the model will wonder if she is doing something wrong when you are not pressing the shutter release and it may make her nervous or prompt her to move when you don't want her to.

Subject

The most obvious subject is the model, but with a little more thought it may not be that simple. Something that the model is interacting with may also be important or only part of the model may be the subject.

A hitchhiker wouldn't make sense without the road so the road becomes part of the subject and must be seen.

Alternately the subject could be much narrower in scope.

You must decide what the subject of the image is and compose the image to show it.

Fill the frame

A very common mistake in photographing people is to line up the center of the focusing screen with the person's face. Usually there is a focusing aid or metering point that entices a lot of people to aim the camera as though it were a rifle. This leaves almost half the frame unused above the subject's head.

In many cases it is necessary to focus and set the exposure on the model's face but once that is done you need to take a moment to look at the whole picture. Move the camera and zoom in so that only the things that you intend to be in the picture remain.

Format

You have probably seen photographers on TV turn the camera sideways when shooting. It is not done just to look cool, there is a purpose. Most cameras have a rectangular frame so it is longer horizontally than it is vertically. The format is changed from horizontal to vertical to make better use of the frame space and so objects that are not part of the picture are eliminated.

Viewpoint and Angle

Look at the angle of the picture. It is not necessary to always shoot straight on. Try moving higher, lower, left or right.

Also make sure to watch objects in the background in relation to your subject. Changing viewpoint will also change which objects are include in the picture.

Rule of thirds

The eye tends to be drawn to the third lines in an image so key points in the photograph should be arranged along them especially at the intersections. It is also better for the model to be facing into the photograph rather than out of it. In this image the models face is at one intersection, the wineglass at the intersection on the other side provides balance.

Depth of Field

This describes the range of objects that will be in focus. It is controlled by the size of the aperture, which is the opening in the lens. One thing that is a bit confusing is that the f-stops that are used to measure the aperture are reverse of what you might think. A small number represents a large opening and a large number represents a small opening.

If a large aperture (small number) is selected the depth of field will be lower which means a smaller range of objects will be in focus. This can be useful for cutting down distractions in the background. To bring the background into focus with your subject a smaller aperture (large number) would be selected.

Since the aperture also effects the exposure the shutter speed must also be changed to get the correct exposure after the aperture has been set. Some cameras have an aperture priority mode that will automatically give you the correct exposure while keeping the aperture set to the value you selected.

Focal Length

It is usually recommend that a longer focal length or telephoto lens be used especially for full body shots. This will avoid wide-angle distortion or fish eye effect that is cause by the shorter lenses. If you must use the wide angle lens you should avoid any part of the models body being closer to the camera since it will appear abnormally large

Distractions

These are things that don't belong in the picture. Take time to look for objects sitting in the picture, wall outlets, people walking in the background, or lines intersecting the subject.

Contrast

The picture will have more impact if the model does not blend into the background. Contrasting colors or light and dark may be used for emphasis.

Framing

Framing the subject with other objects can be used to highlight and focus attention on the model.

Diagonals

Posing the model diagonally in the frame makes better use of the available space and sets a more casual mood to the image

Leading lines

Patterns or objects in the image can be used to lead the eye to a particular point in the image.

Close ups

Close ups can bring attention to details that are often missed. The results often have much more impact than expected when taking the picture. It can also be a good format for someone who is worried about being recognized in a nude photograph. Some care should be taken to take the images in a tasteful manner though.

In order to do this type of shot you should look for a macro focus feature on your camera. If your camera does not have one you can get a set of inexpensive close up lenses at your local photo store that will screw onto the filter thread. .

Wardrobe

Even if you are shooting nudes that may not mean entirely nude. Adding a bit of concealment or color can add interest to the photo so that the best image may not be the one that shows the most skin. If the model is nervous it also gives her control over how much is exposed. Many women are more comfortable if they start out dressed and work their way towards nude as they are more comfortable.

The clothes that the model wears before the shoot are also important. She should wear loose fitting clothes that will not leave pressure marks on her skin. The elastic in bras and panties can leave marks that take a surprisingly long time to fade. Even with a model that is not posing nude I will often recommend that they remove binding underclothes because they can be seen even through clothing.

Many women will have some outfits that they like. It doesn't hurt to have a few other choices so that a larger variety is available. Much of this can be obtained cheaply at garage sales, swap meets or on the Internet. Simple is usually better, more complex or elaborate clothes will tend to distract from the model. Look at the outfit in relation to the background and the model's coloring. You may find that the original outfits that you planed to use may not be quite right.

An important thing to remember is that it should fit well. If a woman is a little heavier than she would like there is a tendency to try and get into smaller outfit.

This will only serve to exaggerate what they were trying to hide by wrinkling and binding in all the wrong places.

Other things to have available

Combs
A mirror
Hair spray
Hair clips
Water
Snacks

Props

One of the difficult things for beginning models is figuring out what to do with their hands. Having a few props can solve this problem in addition to providing some interest to the image. This can be something small like a flower or scarf, or something larger such as the tub shown below.
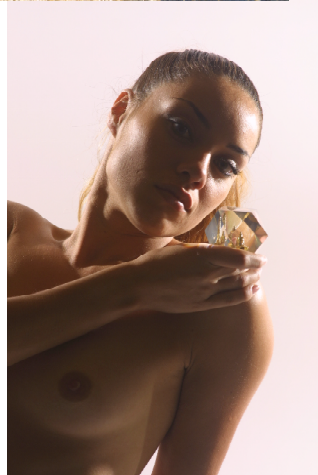
Editing

Ideally the pictures should be perfect right out of the camera. In the real world this is not the case. The good news is that computers now make retouching photographs much less difficult than it used to be. Getting a good photo editor program will give you a good variety of tools to work with, probably more than you will ever need. These are a few that you are likely to find useful. Be sure to keep a copy of your original to go back to just in case you make a mistake.

Cropping

This is cutting down an image to exclude unwanted items or space from the photograph. This may be because there was an unexpected object in the frame, or that the frame format of the camera didn't quite fit what you wanted. You may also want to make a close-up shot from a large one.

Brightness-Contrast

If the exposure was not quite right it can be adjusted later as long as it was no so far off that detail was lost at the light or dark ends of the range.

Tone Balance

This can help in images that have maximum or minimum ranges are correct but the mid range needs adjustment. An example would be if the model were back lit. Changing the brightness would result in a hazy, washed out look in much of the image. Changing the intensity of just the mid tones can obtain a better correction.

Color balance

If the light color was not what you had hoped for shifting the balance a bit can change it. White is made up of three colors of light, Red, Blue and Green, so compensations can be made by adding or subtracting small amounts of these colors.

Touch ups

Small blemishes, a hair out of place or other distracting details of an image can also be corrected. Typically the easiest tools to use for this are the clone and smear tools.

Bringing it all Together

One of the difficult things to do, at least at first, is to remember all of the things that you have read and studied at the moment it is time to shoot. It is surprisingly easy to be concerned about one thing and forget five others. It can help to have a checklist.

Preparing for the Shoot

1. An idea- What do you want the images to look like
2. Props
3. Wardrobe
4. Location-background
5. Lighting
6. Model
7. Makeup

During the Shoot

This is when the pressure is on and it is easiest to forget a step. A little time should be taken on each frame to make sure everything is right.

1. Pose
2. Exposure
3. Focus
4. Facial Expression
5. Composition
   1. Format
   2. Fill the Frame
   3. Depth of Field
   4. Rule of Thirds
   5. Leading lines
   6. Distractions
   7. Press the button

Picture Recipes

This section is designed to help with some of the confusion by giving layouts for different type of pictures. These can be used the same way a cook uses a recipe to avoid forgetting a vital ingredient. Below is the key for the symbols used in the lighting diagrams.
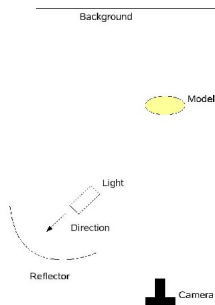
Why is the light important? Here is a typical shot with the on camera flash. This setup often causes red eye. Also notice the distracting shadow on the wall and the unflattering quality of the light. You will notice that there is a distinct difference between this and the examples that follow.
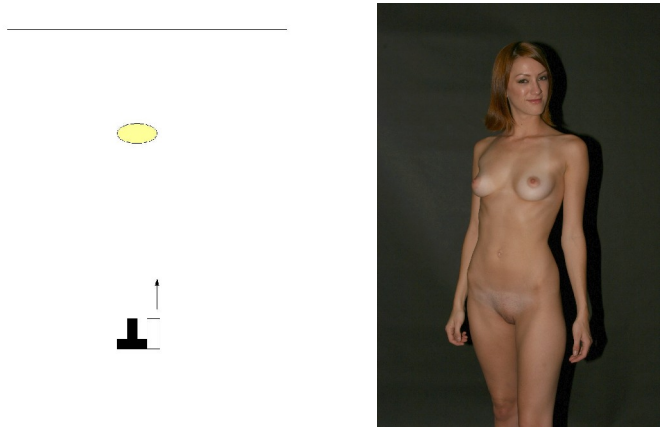
Natural Light – This is the simplest and the cheapest lighting setup. Even so, it can produce nice results.
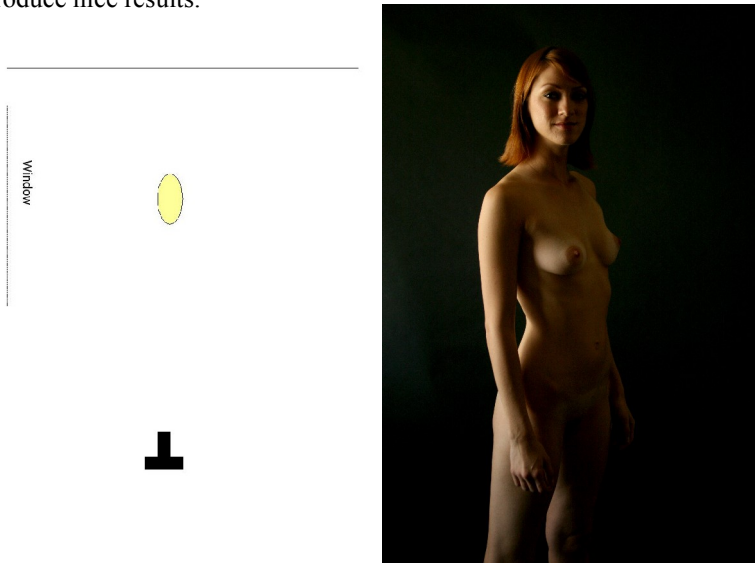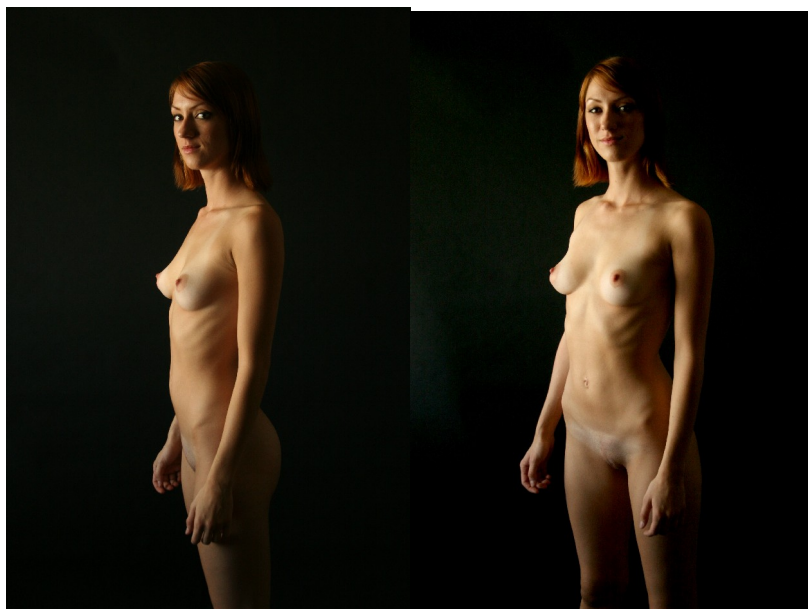
This was lit with a window to the left side of the frame. It provided a soft light that showed off the contours of the model's body well. Also if the model is faced away from the light source it gives her some anonymity in case she is nervous about posing nude. The background in this case is a black seamless paper but any attractive background can be used, either plain or decorative.

Silhouette – This effect is produced with the light on the background only. No forward lighting is used. This also does not clearly show the model's face.
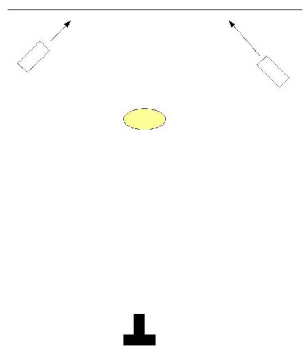
Single Light
These are done with a single direct light source.
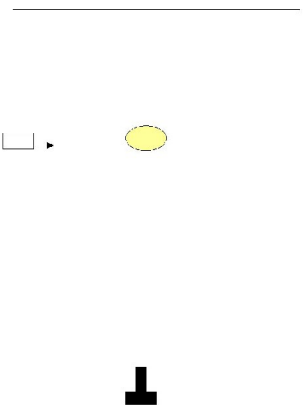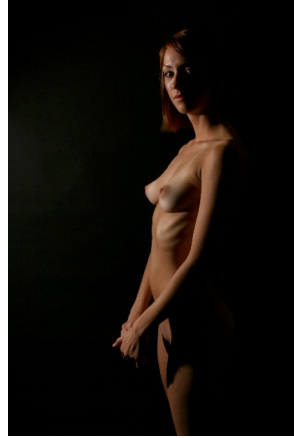
The above were done with a single direct light from the left side of the frame.
This setup produces very deep shadows.

In the next group the light was moved further forward so that more light hits the
model from the front.
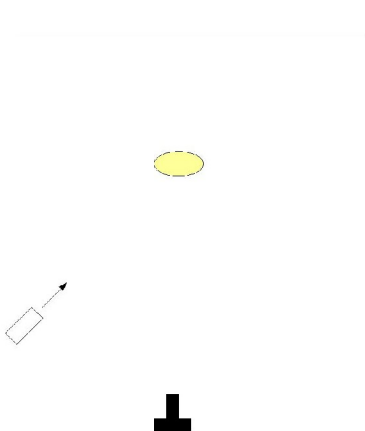
Diffused Light

The light can be softened by bouncing it off a reflector or directing it through a thin fabric. White walls or ceilings can be used as reflectors as well as poster board, foil or light fabrics. You can see that diffusing the light softens the edge of the shadows.
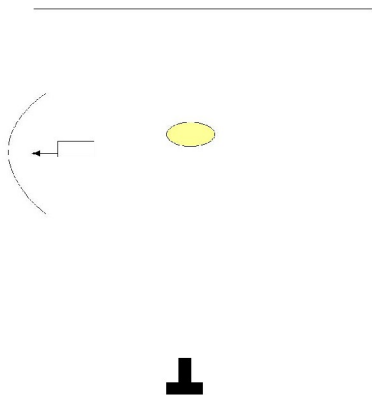
Forward diffused light
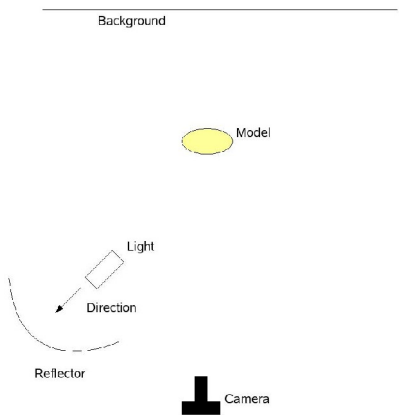
Multiple Lights
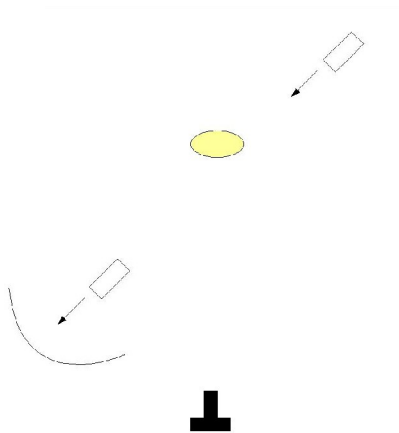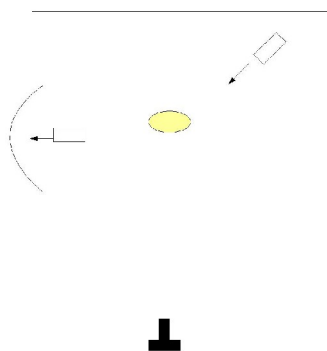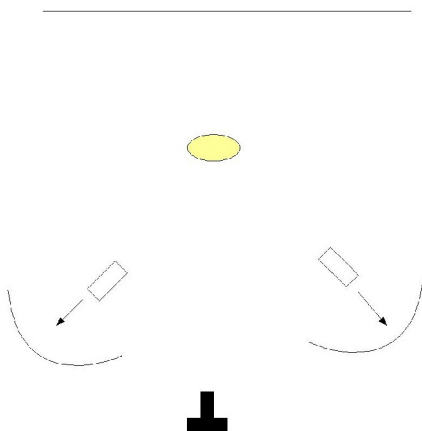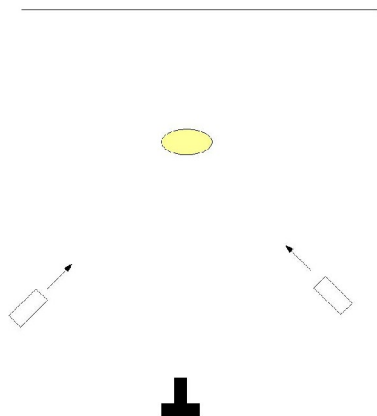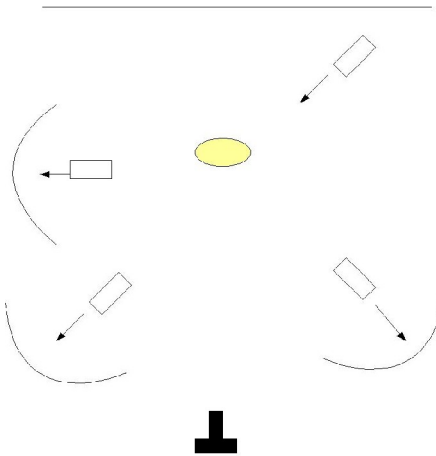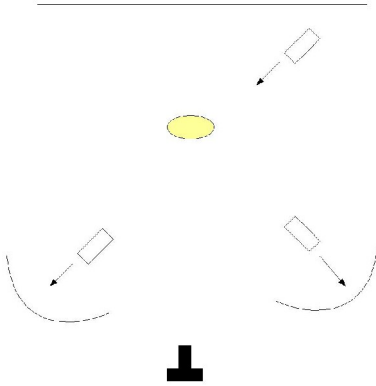
Low Light

These can be difficult, and you can expect to mess up more shots than normal, but the results when it turns out right are often worth it. The shutter speed on these will be slow so the camera needs to be supported by a tripod or something else steady like a table. The model also needs to be still but try to be relaxed during the exposure. Using a faster film or setting the ISO/ASA setting on a digital camera will also help though it may create a little more grain. The following pictures were taken with candlelight only. The shutter speeds were 1-2 seconds.

Posing Guide

For an inexperienced model posing ideas can be difficult. This section can be
used for ideas to begin with. You should feel free to experiment with variations.

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